

# **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife**

## **Hunt Coordinator Guidelines**

### **9/27/2011**

#### **Objectives**

These guidelines reference volunteer Hunt Coordinators (HC) who assist the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department or WDFW) in the management of special damage mitigation hunts.

The objectives of these Hunt Coordinator guidelines are as follows:

1. Provide consistency regarding the administration of damage hunts managed by Hunt Coordinators across the state.
2. Ensure all eligible hunters are treated fairly and equitably with respect to hunt opportunities.
3. Optimize hunt objectives to minimize wildlife damage.

#### **Qualifications**

Hunt Coordinators are individuals who assist the state on a voluntary basis to mitigate wildlife damage. A Hunt Coordinator's primary responsibility is to act as a liaison between local landowners, WDFW, and eligible hunters. Potential Hunt Coordinators must meet the following minimum qualifications prior to appointment:

- Resides within or in close proximity to the hunt area.
- Has access to reliable transportation.
- Is available during hunting seasons to support the applicable hunts to ensure hunt objectives are achieved to the greatest possible extent.
- Passes a Criminal Background Check. The standard for a Hunt Coordinator should be the same as for a Certified Master Hunter.
- The Enforcement and Wildlife Program's must concur with the selection of and appointment of the Hunt Coordinator.

In addition, the following characteristics are desirable:

- Is familiar with landowners in the area where hunting may occur.
- Is a long standing member of the community in which the hunts will be conducted.
- Is thoroughly familiar with and knowledgeable about the wildlife being hunted.
- Is a Master Hunter in good standing, or is familiar with and supportive of the Master Hunter program's goals and objectives.

#### **Appointment and Orientation**

All Hunt Coordinators will be appointed on an annual basis by the Department. Once a new Hunt Coordinator has been appointed, he/she shall be appropriately trained as follows:

- As a formal volunteer of WDFW, they shall be instructed and agree to appropriate WDFW volunteer policies and procedures.

- They shall be instructed on how to track, record, and submit hunt coordinator activity time to the appropriate WDFW volunteer coordinator.
- They shall be trained in the duties, responsibilities, and restricted actions of a Hunt Coordinator. Such training would include the safe handling of firearms/hunting implements.
- They shall be provided with an orientation of the area to be hunted so they know the safety issues which must be addressed to prevent property damage, address safe shooting zones, and avoid any situations that might endanger people or property.
- They shall become familiar with the Master Hunter program.

## **Duties**

Duties of the Hunt Coordinator include but are not limited to the following:

- Contact landowners to understand their needs for conducting a safe and efficient hunt and to determine appropriate areas and other limitations desired by the property owner/manager.
- Provide eligible hunters with information pertaining to the hunt. Information may include maps of the hunt area, hunt area boundary information, specific conditions of the hunt, local ordinances and restrictions (legal, equipment, or otherwise), timing of the hunts, landowner information, and other information as appropriate.
- Provide eligible hunters with current Hunt Coordinator contact information. This information may include restrictions on when the Coordinator may or may not be contacted. This information shall be available to hunters with reasonable advance notice for hunters to prepare for and participate in hunts.
- Contacts permit holders to schedule hunts<sup>1</sup>. Hunters shall be contacted in the order of the drawing when hunt opportunities become available. A minimum of 24 hours notice is advised but may not be practical in certain circumstances.
- Establish reasonable limitations on hunter activities as necessary to ensure safe and ethical practices are followed.
- Act as the primary point of contact between landowners and hunters.
- Notify appropriate Regional Captain or Wildlife Program Manager if it is necessary to restrict hunting access to any permittees who:
  1. Fail to abide by or willfully ignore Master Hunter ethical standards, legal requirements, or hunt restrictions and conditions which have been communicated to the hunter.
  2. Lack the necessary skills, judgment, or equipment to safely and ethically fulfill hunt obligations. When appropriate, this may include hunting implement or access restrictions that are more restrictive than local or state requirements.
- Work directly with WDFW Regional staff (Wildlife Program and Enforcement Program) to reach consensus on authority to apply reasonable limitations (e.g. antlered versus antlerless harvest under an “any elk tag” situation).
- Seek specific authority to dispatch wounded animals that a hunter cannot kill due to legal or safety related issues, ethical matters, or other specific hunt constraints.
- Contact local law enforcement to promptly notify them of any hunt related individual who has violated any laws or hunting regulations.
- Communicate with WDFW Regional staff at the conclusion of each hunting season to summarize activities. This summary should include lessons learned and any recommendations for improvement or future tasks including herding, hazing, fence repair, or other such activities outside established hunt seasons.
- Properly track and record time in accordance with WDFW volunteer policies.

Additional responsibilities and duties may be assigned by Regional Wildlife Program Managers or Enforcement Captains as necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Does not apply in general hunt areas with a Hunt Coordinator but without permit holders (e.g. 3911 and 3912).

### **Hunt Order Priority Ranking**<sup>1</sup>

When a specific hunting opportunity is limited to a number of hunters less than the total number of permit holders, eligible hunt permit holders shall be ranked.

The initial ranking shall be based on the draw order of each eligible permit holder. The WDFW shall provide each hunt coordinator with a list of permit holders and the order in which each was drawn.

Permit holders shall be contacted in order of ranking as hunt opportunities allow (the permit holder at the top of the ranked list shall be contacted first). A permit holder shall be reordered to the bottom of the priority list at the completion of a given hunt opportunity, regardless of whether or not the hunter harvests an animal. However, a Hunt Coordinator has the discretion to leave a permit holder's ranking intact when a hunt opportunity is severely restricted, or an unforeseen circumstance arises outside the hunter's direct control, which in the judgment of the Hunt Coordinator, justifies allowing the hunter to retain his ranking.

When a Hunt Coordinator is unsuccessful in contacting or scheduling a permit holder for a given hunt opportunity, the HC may contact the next permit holder in the ranked sequence. The attempt to contact should be documented. This shall not alter the ranking of the permit holder(s) not contacted or scheduled.

If multiple permit hunts are scheduled in the same hunt area with conflicting season end dates, the Hunt Coordinator may at his discretion give precedence to permit holders whose permits expire first.

A permit holder may request his current ranked order from the hunt coordinator, and if so it shall be provided.

Reordering may not provide a permit holder with preferential or disadvantageous treatment for any reason other than those listed herein.

<sup>1</sup> Does not apply in general hunt areas with a Hunt Coordinator, but without permit holders (e.g. 3911 and 3912).

### **Restricted Activities**

Hunt Coordinators may not engage in the following activities:

- Providing preferential treatment to individual hunters.
- Tolerate unethical or illegal activity. Actions of this nature must be reported immediately.
- Lending personal property to hunters to be utilized in the hunts.